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HEADLINE: The smoke has cleared and Netscape's fire burns bright

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BODY:
If you have been following the saga of our 1996 Readers' Choice Awards,
you know that this year's contest has been surrounded by more than its share
of drama. We conducted the initial survey on our Web site in February but
neglected to put in place any safeguards that would allow us to either
identify questionable voting patterns or validate that the responses were
statistically representative of InfoWorld's readers. For instance, we didn't
capture IP addresses or require user identification during voting.

When, for the fourth year in a row, OS/2 won, and by an overwhelming majority
(at least six times the votes of its nearest competitors) in three of the
four categories, we knew the survey could not be relied upon and threw out
the results. Outrage and anger and hundreds of passionate e-mails followed,
but rather than abandon the reader survey altogether, we announced that we
would have an outside research company administer a statistically valid
survey of InfoWorld (both print and Electric) readers using the same ballot
we had used in February.

With that survey complete, we have a true readers' choice: Netscape Navigator

3.0, which grabbed the "overall winner" category. Ironically, the InfoWorld
Test Center did not present any browser with a Product of the Year award,
debating that even though the product niche dominated 1996, neither Navigator
nor Microsoft Internet Explorer was so impressive as to warrant an award.
Besides, some of our editors argued, browsers are on the verge of
disappearing into the operating system, so surfing the World Wide Web soon
won't be any more significant than surfing your hard drive. You weren't
convinced and, in fact, chose Navigator by a large margin over Internet
Explorer.

In the client category, Microsoft Windows NT Workstation 4.0 edged out
Iomega's Jaz drive by only 3.3 percentage points, which, statistically, is a
tie; in the server category, it was Microsoft Windows NT Server; in
networking, Norton Administrator Suite, Premiere Edition 3.0; and in the
Internet area, Netscape Navigator 3.0, again.

Lest the OS/2 fans among InfoWorld's readership question our methodology,
here's how we conducted the survey: We selected a sample audience on an nth
name random basis among InfoWorld's subscribers, a sampling that represents
76 percent of our entire-qualified base. Then we hired First Market
Research, in Austin, Texas, to conduct 300 telephone interviews between May 5
and May 12, screening out readers employed by any computer-related hardware

or software vendors. The sampling variance ranges from plus or minus 2.5 percent to 5.8 percent.

Readers' Choice Awards results: InfoWorld readers make the call

Top five overall winners

(1) Netscape Navigator 3.0   26.3%

(2) Microsoft Windows NT Workstation 4.0   13.7%

(3) Iomega Jaz Drive   8.7%

(4) Other (no clear winner)   7.7%

(5) Microsoft Windows NT Server   7.3%

Percentages of votes based on 300 participants.

Top five client winners

Microsoft Windows NT Workstation 4.0(*)   28.3%

Iomega Jaz drive(*)   25.0%

IBM Thinkpad 560   9.3%

U.S. Robotics Pilot 1000   7.7%

Epson Stylus Pro   5.7%

Top five server winners

Microsoft Windows NT Server   44.0%

Novell IntranetWare   21.3%

Sun Enterprise 3000   7.3%

OS/2 Warp Server, Version 4.0   5.7%

Backup Exec for Windows NT 6.11,
Single Server Edition   5.0%

Top five networking winners

Norton Administrator Suite,
Premiere Edition 3.0   27.3%

EtherLink III LAN PC Card   20.3%

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Sniffer Network Analyzer 5.0   11.3%

Lexmark Optra Lxi+   5.7%

Other (Novell 4.11)   4.3%

Top five Internet winners

Netscape Navigator 3.0   56.7%

Microsoft Internet Explorer 3.01   12.3%

FrontPage 1.1   9.7%

Adobe PageMill 2.0   5.3%

Microsoft Internet Information Server 3.0   4.0%

(*) Microsoft Windows NT Workstation 4.0 and Iomega Jaz drive statistically tied.

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